

Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven

Key Verse: *“Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.”*

—**Matthew 13:52**

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 13:31-33,44-52

TODAY’S LESSON CONSISTS

of five short parables spoken by Jesus and which he introduced in each case by saying that they contained lessons concerning the “kingdom of heaven.” The Bible provides God’s glorious promise that his coming kingdom will have two phases, one heavenly, and one earthly. In both cases, his perfect will shall be done for the blessing of his entire intelligent creation.—Matt. 6:10

The parable of the mustard seed is the first word-picture of our lesson and is representative of the false church system which has sought to establish God’s kingdom by its own authority. (Matt. 13:31,32) Developed from the “least of all seeds,” it grew throughout the centuries into the great institution of Christendom, having many denominational branches. Its development has resulted in the “birds of the air” lodging in its branches, a fitting picture of the defiling influences of Satan and his representatives as they have poisoned the many church branches, all of which claim to embody the kingdom of heaven. These institutions will have no part

in the kingdom of heaven, as they do not proclaim the true Gospel.

The parable of the leaven is also one in which the conditions described will not lead one to the heavenly kingdom. (Matt. 13:33) Leaven represents sinful, corrupting doctrines which “a woman,” representing church systems of the present age, introduces and mixes with “three measures of meal,” the pure doctrine of our Lord and the apostles, until “the whole” is corrupted. Here we see that only an understanding of the pure Gospel message will enable one to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The parable of the hidden treasure likens the kingdom of heaven to “treasure hid in a field,” which a man found and had such great joy that he sold all that he owned and bought the field. (Matt. 13:44) We may apply this parable to our Lord Jesus, who bought the entire human family with his blood. He did this because of the great joy he had at the prospect of recovering the “treasure” of the entire race of mankind. This treasure is of two kinds—first, the church, the bride of Christ, who will be exalted to his right hand. The remainder of the world is also a treasure, and will be blessed in the earthly phase of the Messianic kingdom.—Gen. 22:18; Acts 3:20-25

The parable of the pearl of great price speaks of a man seeking pearls, and when he finds one of great value, he sells all that he has, and buys the pearl. (Matt. 13:45,46) The pearl of great price illustrates the grand opportunity of being part of the heavenly kingdom. The price is our consecration, even unto death; nothing less will secure this valuable pearl.—Rom. 12:1

The parable of the fish net tells of a net being cast into the sea, gathering fish of every kind. When the net is full, it is drawn to shore, upon which the fish are sorted out—the good fish are gathered into vessels, and the bad are cast away. (Matt. 13:47-50) Thus at the end of this age, only those who have been “faithful unto death,” will enter into the heavenly kingdom.—Rev. 2:10 ■